

The cover features a collage of images. The top half shows a modern building with a weathered, rusty metal frame and black corrugated metal siding. A large window reflects the surrounding landscape. To the right of the window is a tall, green, columnar cactus. The bottom half of the cover is a semi-transparent white overlay containing the title "OUTDOOR REVIVAL Guide" in a dark blue serif font. Below the overlay, there are images of potted plants, including a succulent and a large, textured white ceramic pot.

OUTDOOR REVIVAL Guide

TURNING BACKYARDS INTO LIVING SPACES

Your backyard is more than just a patch of grass or a paved area, it's an extension of your home, a space to entertain, relax, and enjoy life.

In Australia, the outdoor room has become a long-term trend, and for good reason: a thoughtfully designed exterior can double as a lifestyle upgrade and a property value booster.

It's where family, friends, and even quiet afternoons unfold.

*Think of it this way:
your street facade is the handshake,
your backyard is the conversation.*

01

ASSESS THE SPACE BEFORE YOU START



Before jumping into decking, paving, or plants, take a careful look at what you have:

SUN AND SHADE PATTERNS

Observe where the sun hits during morning, midday, and afternoon — and note any shade that could protect seating or alfresco areas.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Check for moss, cracks, uneven paving, and water pooling. These are early warning signs that may require remediation before you start beautifying.

NATURAL FEATURES

Trees, slopes, or established shrubs can be incorporated or need trimming/removal. Always consider professional arborist advice if trees are large or potentially diseased.

Trade Tip: Drainage should be your first priority. Slopes of 1–2% away from buildings prevent water ingress and long-term rot. This is especially critical for timber decks or structures close to your home.

02 DECKING, PAVING, AND HARD SURFACES

This is where functionality meets design. Your choices will define the look, feel, and durability of your outdoor living space.

Decking Options:

Timber (Merbau, Spotted Gum): Classic, warm feel. Requires oiling or sealing every 1–2 years. Complies with AS 1720.1 for structural timber.

Composite Decking: Low maintenance, termite resistant, ideal for long-lasting finishes. Costs more upfront but reduces ongoing work.

Height & Framing: Ensure all decks are built with proper bearers and joists, tied into footings to comply with NCC Vol. 2, Section 3.5.1.

Paving Options:

Concrete or Stamped Concrete: Affordable, durable, and versatile in finish.

Natural Stone: Beautiful and high-end but heavier and more expensive to install.

Tiles (Outdoor Rated): Modern look, requires slip-resistant finishes and professional laying with correct expansion joints.

Example: A 6x4 m timber deck can cost \$10,000–\$18,000 fully installed with structural compliance, while a natural stone paved area of similar size may start at \$12,000–\$20,000 depending on the type and labour.

03 GARDEN DESIGN & GREEN SPACES



Plan for All Seasons: Mix evergreen and seasonal plants for colour year-round.

Choose the Right Plants: Coastal or dry-climate areas need hardy, low-maintenance species. Avoid fast-spreading weeds or invasive root systems

Mulch & Soil: Bulk delivery of soil and mulch is cost-effective and reduces trips to hardware stores.

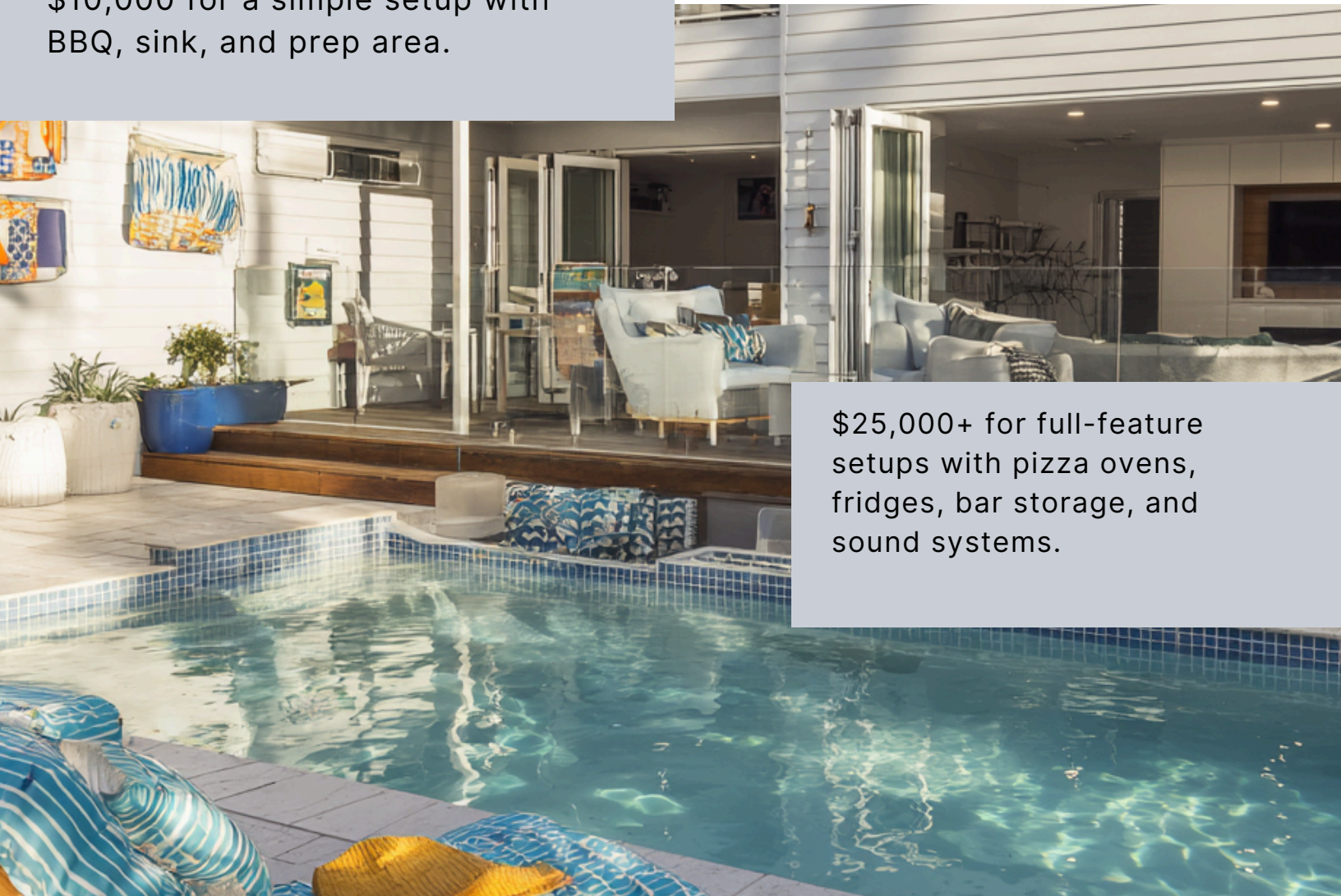
TRADE TIP: Ensure irrigation lines are planned at the design stage. Proper irrigation prevents water wastage and keeps plants thriving.

Your outdoor room isn't just hard surfaces, plants are the furniture of the garden.

04 OUTDOOR KITCHENS & DINING AREAS

NOTHING SAYS AUSTRALIAN ENTERTAINING LIKE AN ALFRESCO KITCHEN OR DINING SPACE.

\$10,000 for a simple setup with BBQ, sink, and prep area.



\$25,000+ for full-feature setups with pizza ovens, fridges, bar storage, and sound systems.

A compact 3x2 m alfresco kitchen in Brisbane with a bench, sink, BBQ, and storage drawers cost around \$12,500 fully installed - but will be a significant lifestyle upgrade for a family.

04 OUTDOOR KITCHENS & DINING AREAS

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS



Hard surfaces must be level and waterproofed properly under AS 3740 for wet areas if there's an outdoor sink.

Electrical and plumbing should always be installed by licensed tradespeople, pre-planned to avoid retrofitting headaches.



Retractable shading or pergolas help with comfort and protect appliances from the elements.



05 LIGHTING, HEATING & AMBIENCE

A backyard isn't just for daylight hours. Proper lighting and heating elevate your outdoor space to an evening retreat.

LED Path Lighting: Enhances safety and adds subtle charm.

Feature Spotlights: Highlight trees, walls, or water features.

Outdoor Heaters or Fire Pits: Extend usability through cooler months.

Compliance: Electrical installations must comply with AS/NZS 3000 and outdoor-rated fittings.



06 BUDGETING YOUR OUTDOOR ROOM (2025)

Outdoor Feature Typical 2025 Budget Guide

Basic deck or patio: \$10,000 – \$18,000 6x4 m timber or composite deck with footings

Full paving + small garden: \$12,000 – \$20,000 Includes base prep, drainage, and materials

Outdoor kitchen setup \$10,000 – \$25,000 Depending on appliances and cabinetry

Landscaping, lighting, irrigation \$5,000 – \$12,000 Mix of plants, soil, lights, and irrigation

Combined high-end makeover \$30,000 – \$55,000+ Deck, garden, kitchen, lighting; full outdoor transformation



Tip: Prioritise essential structural works (decking, drainage, alfresco base) before investing in decorative elements. The foundation sets your success.

07 COMMON PITFALLS & LESSONS LEARNED

Not checking fall for drainage — water pooling under decking or around kitchens causes rot and repair costs.

Choosing inappropriate plants — fast-growing weeds or invasive roots can ruin paving and structures.

Cutting corners on trade installation — skipping waterproofing or electrical safety inspections leads to expensive fixes.

Ignoring sun and shade patterns — a sunny space in summer without shading can be unusable.

Overcomplicating design — too many zones or ornaments clutter the space and add cost.



08 DESIGN FLOW FROM STREET TO BACKYARD

When you step from street to backyard, it should feel like walking through one beautifully orchestrated home — not two disconnected zones.

Your facade and outdoor living space should feel like a continuation of the same story:

Repeat textures, cladding, and colour choices from your front facade into decking or alfresco walls.

Align lighting styles — pathway lights in front, feature lighting in the back.

Use consistent trims and materials where the home meets outdoor elements (pergolas, fences, screens).



GLOSSARY

Alfresco Area

A covered outdoor dining or entertaining space, often connected to the kitchen or living room.

Ambience Lighting

Soft, atmospheric lighting used to create mood and warmth in outdoor areas.

Arborist

A qualified tree specialist who assesses, trims, or removes trees safely and according to local regulations.

AS 1720.1

Australian Standard for structural timber design — ensures decks and timber structures are engineered safely.

AS 3740

Australian Standard for waterproofing in wet areas — applies to outdoor kitchens with sinks or plumbing.

AS/NZS 3000 (Wiring Rules)

Electrical standards that licensed electricians must follow for safe outdoor electrical installations.

Bearers & Joists

Structural framing members that support a deck. Bearers run lengthways; joists sit across them.

Bulk Delivery

Ordering soil, mulch, rocks, or materials in large quantities to reduce cost per cubic metre and minimise delivery trips.

Composite Decking

A manufactured decking product made of recycled plastics and wood fibres — low maintenance and termite resistant.

Decking

A raised platform made of timber or composite boards used to create outdoor living and entertainment areas.

Drainage Fall / Grade

The slope directing water away from buildings or structures (usually 1–2%). Essential to prevent mould, rot, and water damage.

Expansion Joints

Gaps in paving or tiling that allow materials to expand or contract with temperature changes without cracking.

Facade (Street-Facing Facade)

The front exterior of a home, often designed to create first impressions for street appeal.

Feature Lighting

Spotlights or directional lights used to highlight key elements like trees, walls, or water features.

Fire Pit / Outdoor Heater

A heating source used to make outdoor spaces comfortable during cool months.

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Footings

Concrete foundations installed beneath decking or structures to support weight and ensure stability.

Green Spaces

Areas containing plants, lawns, shrubs, and trees that bring softness and life into an outdoor design.

Hardscape / Hard Surfaces

Non-plant elements of outdoor design such as paving, decking, concrete, tiles, and retaining walls.

Irrigation System

Pipes, drip lines, or sprinklers that deliver water to garden beds or lawns efficiently.

Natural Features

Existing elements such as slopes, trees, garden beds, or rock formations that can be incorporated into outdoor design.

Natural Stone Paving

Paving made from materials like bluestone, travertine, or sandstone — durable and premium in appearance.

NCC (National Construction Code)

Australia's building code detailing safety and structural compliance requirements for all home works, including decks.

Outdoor Kitchen

A built-in cooking and entertaining area outdoors, usually including a BBQ, bench space, sink, storage, and sometimes fridges or ovens.

Outdoor Rated Fittings

Lights, sockets, and appliances designed for weather exposure and compliant with electrical safety standards.

Paving

A hard surface created using concrete, tiles, natural stone, brick, or pavers to form walkways, patios, or seating spaces.

Pergola

A semi-covered outdoor structure providing shade or protection, often attached to or near the home.

Property Value Booster

Any upgrade that increases the resale appeal or financial worth of a home — outdoor living areas are a top example in Australia.

GLOSSARY

Seasonal Planting

Choosing plants that offer year-round colour or interest by mixing evergreen species with flowering or deciduous varieties.

Shade Patterns

The way shadows move across the yard throughout the day, influencing design choices for seating, planting, or alfresco zones.

Site Assessment

The process of inspecting drainage, slopes, sun exposure, existing materials, and defects before starting outdoor works.

Slip-Resistant Tile

A tile specifically rated for safety in outdoor or wet areas, preventing slips and falls.

Soil & Mulch

Topsoil provides nutrients for plants; mulch sits on top to retain moisture and reduce weeds.

Structural Compliance

Meeting all Australian building standards related to decks, footings, drainage, and construction quality.

Timber Decking (Merbau, Spotted Gum)

Natural hardwood decking materials commonly used in Australia, known for durability and rich appearance.

Trade Tip

A professional insight or shortcut from tradies or builders that helps improve quality or prevent costly mistakes.

Water Pooling

Water that collects in low areas due to poor drainage — a major cause of rot, mould, and paving damage.

Wet Area Compliance

Ensuring areas with water access (outdoor sinks, kitchens, drains) meet required waterproofing standards.

Zone Planning

Dividing outdoor spaces into functional areas such as dining, lounging, gardens, and play — essential for a cohesive design.





BACKYARD RENOVATION CHECKLIST

SITE ASSESSMENT & PLANNING:

- ☐ Check sun and shade patterns
- ☐ Identify drainage issues, pooling, or uneven levels
- ☐ Inspect existing paving, cracks, moss, and structural concerns
- ☐ Review natural features (trees, slopes, shrubs)

GOAL: Plan the design and prevent costly mistakes later.

FIX STRUCTURAL + DRAINAGE ISSUES FIRST:

- ☐ Create correct fall (1–2%) away from the house
- ☐ Address water pooling
- ☐ Level ground or repair damaged areas
- ☐ Complete all subsurface preparation

GOAL: Ensure proper drainage before any decorative or structural work begins.

FINALISE DESIGN & ZONES:

- ☐ Map zones (dining, lounge, fire pit, garden, pathways)
- ☐ Decide deck/patio locations and sizes
- ☐ Select materials (timber, composite, stone, tiles)
- ☐ Confirm tree removal or retention with arborist advice

GOAL: Define layout and materials before construction.

INSTALL HARDSCAPE FOUNDATIONS (DECK, FOOTINGS) :

- Build decks and subframes (bearers and joists)
- Install concrete pads, slab bases, and footings
- Compact base layers for paving or tiles

GOAL: Ensure all foundations meet NCC and structural standards.

COMPLETE PAVING, TILING & HARD SURFACES:

- Lay paving, concrete, or tiles
- Install slip-resistant tiles where needed
- Add expansion joints
- Build retaining borders or pathways

GOAL: Create durable, safe, and visually cohesive hard surfaces.

COMPLETE PLUMBING & ELECTRICAL ROUGH-INS:

- Run water lines for outdoor sinks or irrigation
- Install underground conduits for lighting and power
- Plan for BBQs, fridges, heaters, and feature lighting

GOAL: All work by licensed trades, compliant with AS/NZS 3000 and AS 3740.

BUILD OUTDOOR KITCHENS, PERGOLAS & STRUCTURES:

- Install pergolas, shade systems, and privacy screens
- Build outdoor kitchen frames, cabinets, and benches
- Waterproof areas with sinks
- Fit storage, seating, or custom features

GOAL: Construct functional and weather-resistant outdoor structures.

SET UP IRRIGATION SYSTEMS:

- Lay drip lines, sprinklers, or irrigation zones
- Test pressure and coverage
- Connect to timers or controllers

GOAL: Complete irrigation before soil, mulch, or planting.

LANDSCAPING & PLANTING:

- Add topsoil and mulch
- Plant feature trees, shrubs, and seasonal colour
- Lay lawn or turf
- Shape garden beds and edges

GOAL: Establish greenery suited to the climate and design.

LIGHTING, HEATING & FINAL TOUCHES:

- Install path lights and feature spotlights
- Add heaters or fire pit
- Bring in furniture, decor, and accessories
- Perform final clean-up and walkthrough

GOAL: Add ambience and complete the outdoor living space.

OUTDOOR LIVING OASIS COMPLETE

A structured roadmap ensuring each stage flows logically, minimising rework and achieving both structural integrity and aesthetic success.

